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ABSTRACT

The theory that there are stages in teachers' professional development suggests that those who aim to stimulate or support that growth must be sensitive to the stage each teacher is in. Three stages of development are described: the survival or beginning teacher stage; the middle stage, characterized by an increasing sense of comfort in the teacher role; and the mastery stage, characterized by a sense of confidence and ease. Teachers' center experience indicates that the formal and traditional forms of inservice programs decrease in value as teachers increase in mastery. Workshops and how-to courses are valuable to most first-and second stage teachers, but helpful only occasionally for third-stage teachers. (JD)

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Starting Out, Moving On, Running Ahead
or
How the Teachers' Center Can Attend to Stages in Teachers' Development

By HEIDI WATTS

Heidi Watts has recently joined the staff of the Institute for Experimentation in Teacher Education at Cortland College (SUNY), as coordinator of the Grassroots Teacher-Parent Resource Center. She comes to Grassroots from another rural center, the Mountain Towns' Teacher Center in Vermont. Her past history includes alternating between classroom teaching and working with teachers. *"I first began thinking about stages in teacher development at the Workparty for Rural Teachers' Centers sponsored by the Teachers' Centers Exchange at the Mountain Towns' Teacher Center in Vermont in 1978. Several of the participants met in a final session to exchange ideas, and four of us met again a few months later. Since then I've shared various evolving drafts of this paper at conferences of the National Council of States for Inservice Education, at subsequent Workparties, with a writer's support group, and with teachers everywhere. In fact, the paper is so much the sum of ideas from other people that I hardly think of it as my own."*

Becoming a teacher has no discernible end, this side the grave. The first time we helped someone else to do something, or helped them to know something, we entered teacherdom, a condition we all continue in with more or less officiousness. But in case you are thinking, Oh, yes, so? Let's raise the binoculars and narrow the field under discussion just to the *profession* of teaching.

If you think of teaching as a continuum, the first formal steps begin with teacher preparation programs in universities and colleges. Teacher training programs come in many shapes and sizes. The two most common containers are the "concentration" in education during the undergraduate degree program, now generally leading to a B.A., and the science or arts B.A. plus a fifth year leading to a MAT degree. Unlike many countries we tend to embed our teacher preparation programs in traditional institutions of higher education; indeed, the move has been away from specialized schools of education, as the status of teachers and concern about the quality of our education system have risen. Among professionals, teachers are still at the bottom of the pile, receiving neither

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the financial nor personal recognition accorded doctors or lawyers, but in recent times you don't so often hear the derogatory "If you *can't do it*, teach it."

Teacher training programs try to combine theory, methodology, and actual experience in the classroom. Unfortunately, it is seldom possible to get the three in the right relation to each other for the beginner. Theory, particularly for the intellectual and idealistic, needs a tough grounding in the realities of schools and in objective self-assessment; methodology without theoretical understanding makes mere technicians; anxiety about practice may short-circuit both. Therefore, when the student teacher graduates, writes to the state department for a certificate, and applies for a teaching position (all of this in reverse order, probably) she may be full of information about whats and whys, but very shaky in practice and still lacking the confidence that can come only from repeated and successful experience.

Comes the first day of the first teaching assignment and our typical beginning teacher is suffering a severe attack of stage fright. Our teacher thinks of Wednesday as over-the-hump, and getting through each week is a triumph—TGIF—until gradually things fall into place. Then there comes a time, at the third year, or the fifth, or wherever, when anxiety has quite disappeared except for an occasional tremor when attempting something totally new. Routines of management and response are automatic, and the teacher is talking about burn-out or boredom and again is counting the days on the calendar until the next vacation. The class is "under control," parents are quiet, children do learn to read, to conjugate French verbs, and to pass their math achievements; most classroom situations present no surprises. What's the problem? Just that. And this, in a nutshell, is the challenge for inservice providers: how to help the beginning teacher, the "experienced teacher" (a euphemism for good), and the in-betweener; how to minimize the sense of being overwhelmed for one, and keep the challenge for the other.

There is, of course, a great deal of ground between day one and the state of mastery, or burn-out, which may follow. Between our nervous day-one teacher and that model of confidence, competence, intellectual vigor and human compassion, which is the master teacher (and surely we have all known one or two such paragons), there is a wide span of commitment and ability. The task for us, as teachers of teachers, is to determine the point each teacher is at, and to respond with what is needed *at that moment;* the response may be as varied as bringing in a new set of materials, putting two teachers in touch with one another, or asking an uncomfortable question.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE THEORY

I don't remember whether I was first introduced to stage theory through Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive development, or through the developmental stages of Piaget. Other stage theorists, from Erikson through Kohlberg, have accustomed us to looking for patterns in human growth. Recently stage theory has surfaced and become popular in books on adult growth.[1]

Stage theory assumes a series of steps in development. You go up each step, and each is impossible without the preceding one. You can go backward (regress) down the steps, but progress up again will probably come faster. You may stand with one foot on step three, and one on step one or two. In fact, you may be (and often probably are) in a state of transition, or stuck at one level in some areas while more advanced in others. Developmental stages are often roughly linked to age or experience: no one is expected to reason abstractly or to take a highly principled moral stand at age six, although there are those at sixty who have never attained the higher stages of a given taxonomy. Some theorists describe their stages as invariant and universal, others posit them as a general pattern.

Actually, the growth that results in discernable stages may occur continually, as an ongoing process. It may be a slow, gradual accretion of learning that causes change, as the shell

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of a snail acquires calcium or a tree wraps rings around itself. To see growth in spurts, using metaphors such as stages, steps, stairs, degrees, ladders, may be a Western phenomenon. We Westerners have a linear view of time, as opposed to a circular one; we tend to mark events by anniversaries: "Christmas time last year we were all getting along pretty well." "Johnny's grown up so much since his last birthday." It may be that the labeling of stages reveals the role of noticer rather than the moment of change. It's not that Johnny is suddenly so different, but that someone has suddenly noticed the difference. On the continuum of increasing teacher competence, growth may become evident in the form of sudden revelation. As a result of constant repetition of small management tasks, at first self-conscious, at last automatic, the teacher one day realizes that, like driving the car, she's doing it without thinking about it.

Lawrence Kohlberg suggests several ways in which an individual can be helped to advance from one stage to the next.[2] Association with ideas or people whose thinking is slightly ahead of one's own is particularly helpful. If the other person is too far ahead it is hard to assimilate her thoughts or to imagine yourself acting or thinking in that way. If, however, she is doing just a little better, adding just a bit more, the thought of rising to that is much more manageable.

Another aid to growth is experience: "I do and I understand." Listening to sermons or lectures is of little value until the person has experienced the situation and knows what he needs to know. One of the problems with inservice training is that the student teacher doesn't know what she will need to know in order to teach reading, order materials, quiet a fight. Knowing the right question is half the way to the answer.

A third spur to growth is the opportunity to look back on the experience and discuss it or to bring out the idea and talk it over—steps of reflection and expression. One of Thornton Wilder's characters says, "I didn't know I thought that until I heard myself say it," an experience I am sure we have all had, and an immensely valuable one. Reflection is the process of stepping back and gaining a broader perspective; the formulation that follows enables us to express and clarify the new understanding. An alternation of reflection and expression should lead to greater understanding of the situation and oneself in the situation.

All of us who work with teachers need to consider these aids to growth, to think about how learning environments for *teachers* can be structured to promote interaction with new ideas, opportunities for experiment and for reflection. In order to be able to provide these growth opportunities, it is important first to have an understanding of where the teacher is "at" during each stage of professional development. Following are descriptions of three developmental stages that have been experienced by many teachers in the course of their careers.

Stage One—Survival

Teachers give different names to these stages, but "survival" is the label most often applied to the beginning experience. Kristin Field says, "Stage one is characterized by day-to-day survival, hit-or-miss solutions to problems, and intense feelings of inadequacy."[3] Beginning teachers, by and large, are rigid, insecure, anxious, and intimidated by students, other teachers, and their own expectations for themselves. For each one the degree of anxiety and panic varies, but I have yet to meet a teacher who did not have some of these feelings, and I would be suspicious if I did. Many experienced teachers testify to a recurrence of survival fever when they change grade levels, start in a new school, or shake up the routine in some way.

"I felt as inadequate this year as in my first year of teaching, and I've been at it twelve years. I had so many problem kids I just didn't know how to deal with them."

And about the first year's experience: "My whole concentration was on me—how good I'd have to be to do anything. I thought I had to do all the preparing and performing." In a paper entitled "Developmental Stages of Preschool Teachers," Lilian Katz describes stage one as survival: "during this stage, which may last throughout the first full year of teaching,

the teacher's main concern is whether or not she can *survive*. This preoccupation with survival may be expressed in terms like these: Can I get through the day in one piece . . . without losing a child? Can I make it until the end of the week? . . . the next vacation? Can I really do this kind of work day after day? Will I be accepted by my colleagues?"[4]

Experienced teachers looking back on those first weeks of teaching clearly illustrate the sense of panic, with its rigidity and self-centeredness: "Ten years later I remember exactly everything that happened on the first day. I'd bought a nice wool dress, just right for my image of a school teacher, and even though it was a sweltering September day I was determined to wear it. I'd bought the dress, I was going to wear it. The kids were all in the back of the room. Miles away. Everything I was going to do was written down, minute by minute."

"Mannerism is what I remember most. I felt inadequate and scared. I used the desk between them and me; I stood right behind it."

"I didn't think I was doing the job. I was worried about the kids learning anything and I wondered what the other teachers were thinking. One minute I was up, thinking I was dynamite, and the next I thought, 'I'm not reaching these kids at all.'"

"I had a wonderful student teacher experience but when I got a class of my own, wow! I quit about six times that year. I could relate to the kids as people, but not in the role of teacher, with skills to teach."

In words like these, teachers describe stages in their own development, from the first panicky days when survival in the classroom was the first necessity, to a stage of confidence, ease, and sureness with both children and curriculum, which I would characterize as a final stage. Still, that is not the end of the continuum, because once the process of learning and growth as a teacher stops, boredom sets in. It is one of those situations, Alice, where you have to keep running to stay where you are.

> "Well, in *our* country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else —if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing." "A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now *here*, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place."[5]

A Middle Stage

The first and final stages are easy to characterize, but the middle of the sandwich is much more difficult to classify. Teachers, like learners everywhere, develop at different rates, with different modes of learning, and often with a foot on two different steps of the ladder. Some teachers may get on top of things quickly, but never progress much from keeping order and marching through the textbook. For others it may be years before discipline is easy, though they may be making slow and steady gains toward increasing choices, meeting more suitable needs, and improving the quality of directed thinking in their students. As one very able teacher said to me, "I was a beginning teacher for three years." The speed of growth is not necessarily a measure of the final achievement.

What enables a teacher to overcome the dragons and move on to other concerns? What, indeed, are the next concerns, once survival is assured? Survival in itself is a form of reassurance: "If I make it through today, I can make it through tomorrow," and suddenly it's the end of the day, the week, the month—"June! Praise be, but I'll miss the little monsters!"

One of the most immediate and helpful aids to growth at this stage is positive feedback from students and colleagues. With increasing confidence there is less need to concentrate on the self, more time to begin looking out at *them;* the kids become individuals, with individual needs, rather than a mass threat. By trial and error, discovering what works, new skills of organization and management relieve the teacher of the necessity to be the source of all authority and the font of all knowledge. Good vibes from colleagues and administrators encourage the teacher to open up, accept help, and begin to step back and view the experience with more objectivity. Encouragement and "warm fuzzies" may cause the thing that's praised to happen.

"I began to feel good enough so I could talk to some other teachers. I began to get some

sense of the order of the day; I didn't have to keep looking it up."

"When I'd taught the whole lesson and there was still half the period to go, I had to let some of 'me' creep in. When I discovered that I could be more myself, and that the kids liked that, I began to feel better."

"I began to feel some strengths. I *liked* the kids, even though I hated some of the things they did. I liked them, and they knew it."

"I learned how to set up an environment that didn't rely solely on me, so that they could learn, willy-nilly."

"We went on a lot of field trips, did things together, began to feel comfortable with each other."

The middle stages, then, are characterized by an increasing sense of "comfort," an attitude of appreciation and relationship with the students, a better grasp of long range goals, more attention to child-centered rather than teacher-centered activity, and letting the environment be the teacher. Middle-stage teachers are competent with management and curriculum but they may not be particularly creative. They see from a middle distance, as it were, satisfying school goals but not going beyond them. Many teachers stay at this stage, and all teachers slip back into it from time to time: a difference between the master teacher and the middle stage teacher is that the former may feel discontent with herself on a "middling" day, but a teacher who is not moving on or up may feel satisfied with her work at this level.

Stage of Mastery

The final stage in a teacher's development is characterized by a sense of confidence and ease. The teacher exudes an air of quiet competence; there seems to an outsider to be nothing she can't handle. She seems to have an uncanny insight into the needs of children and can analyze behavior, seeing much more in it than is apparent on the surface. Techniques of organization and management are automatic and natural, growing out of an organic, internalized sense of order. She sees—through and through.

As in any stage, the expressed interests of the teacher are an indication of where she is. The mature teacher is asking questions about children's thinking: *why* questions rather than *how* or *what*, and more global questions about the role of the teacher and the school in society. She is interested in the overall pattern. Where the beginning teacher is focused closely on the immediate problem—this day or hour, this child, that lesson—and herself—the mature teacher is able to take in the whole room and to know, without looking, through delicate clues of sound and movement, what is happening in the hidden corners. The mature teacher sees all of that, and she has some sense of the relationship between her classroom and the rest of the school, her children and the homes they come from.

"Mastery is planning in half an hour something that looks as though it took two weeks when you do it."

"It's having everything be easy, but still feel worthwhile. Knowing exactly what the kids are going to need before they ask."

"Mastery is being able to study one thing—like Egypt—to work on just one subject while meeting the needs of each individual kid."

"When everything you teach connects with everything else you teach. . . . a true sense of wholeness."

However, if teaching is a continuum we can't put an end marker here; indeed, so it appears. At this later stage, and the one before, some teachers begin to talk of burn-out and to look for renewal. Burn-out has two major causes, and several subsidiary ones. The first is exhaustion, which comes after mobilizing all one's resources to meet a crisis--and in teaching that "crisis" may be one of several years' duration. When teachers have a different class, or an unsupportive administration, or are suffering severe strain in another part of their lives, they may rise to meet the challenge by putting out extraordinary energy and effort, but one cannot "rise" indefinitely without collapse. Teachers talk of being drained, losing perspective, needing more support. In some cases they begin to look or feel like stage-one teachers again.

A second kind of burn-out occurs for just the opposite reason—there is no challenge in it anymore. Boredom sets in, it's all old hat—with an occasionally different child or a new colleague to liven things up, but essentially old hat. Often the best teachers are the most susceptible to this kind of burn-out: they find it a slow sort of country when the need to keep running is gone.

Some teachers may find renewal through a course, or through attempting something totally new in the classroom (film-making with six-year-olds or advanced placement history).

"What is most rejuvenating for me is to meet with other teachers who are doing exotic things."

"Sharing is more fun than being fed information, I've had enough of that." Others may change grade levels, pair up with a colleague to teach together, take in a student teacher—or leave teaching altogether. These changes in structure may throw the teacher back to a beginning stage, depending upon the degree of newness and anxiety in the situation, but it never takes as long to come up again when one has had the experience of competence and of growth in the profession before. Occasionally, the change shows the teacher what she might have done differently in her old situation because it gives a new perspective. The best teacher, however, is seldom still for long. Maturity doesn't mean remaining on the plateau. She is constantly examining, reflecting, testing, noting results, and trying again.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS' CENTERS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

What are the implications of teacher development along a continuum for those of us who work in teachers' centers? Clearly, we need to encourage the development of many different kinds of inservice experiences, and to learn how to respond appropriately to teachers in different stages. We need to clarify and sharpen our observational and diagnostic skills in working with teachers so that we can determine what issues to raise and what services to provide. Teachers themselves, particularly those beyond the survival stage, may have some sense of where they are on the continuum. It has been my experience that teachers find it helpful to look back on their own professional development in the light of stage theory, gaining through the exercise some illumination of their own patterns of growth and, when these experiences are shared, an understanding of how different experiences nevertheless arrange themselves into similar patterns.

I would like to describe briefly some of the inservice needs of teachers in each of the three stages, and to suggest some of the ways in which these needs can be met. As is consistent with stage theory, any teacher can "get stuck" at a given stage for a time, and some teachers can get stuck indefinitely. The problem of "stuckness" is important and complex, involved as it is with conditions, both personal and professional, that retard or promote change. Stuckness is a subject worthy of consideration by itself, but for the time being I will assume that the teachers I am describing at each stage are still in the process of transition: changing and growing.

The Beginning Teacher: Surviving and Learning the 'How To'

The immediate and most obvious need of the beginning teacher is for reassurance and practical advice, in about equal measure. Anxiety and fear, both seen in the portrait of the beginning teacher, are notorious for their power to inhibit growth and to foster measures for self-defense that may in turn harden into habitual bad practice: one form of the condition of stuckness. The cause of anxiety may not, in fact, be very serious, but it is in the nature of beginning that the neophyte does not see either the mistakes or the upcoming challenges in perspective. Indeed, part of the natural process of improvement will occur, in its own time, as experience nurtures perspective. What looks frightening today will be laughable tomorrow.

It is appropriate for beginning teachers to be concerned about whether they can do the job properly, whether they can meet both their own and the school's expectations, and whether they can do what's right by the children; but there ought to be no reason for them to be fearful of fellow teachers, administrators, or parents. A supportive and helpful principal, able to set aside some time from his other responsibilities, can make all the difference. So can helpful colleagues. Many teachers speak warmly of a particular colleague who helped them through the rough places in the first year, and a few schools have gone so far as to formalize this in a kind of "buddy" or mentor system. Teachers' center staff can be helpful here in two quite different ways: first, in a general way by offering friendship, encouragement, and non-judgmental support, because they are (in a sense) non-aligned, not linked to any particular school hierarchy; and second, in a specific way by offering materials, making suggestions, and putting the new teacher in touch with resources and resource people. Someone from the center may be able to demonstrate an activity in the classroom or, standing by as aide and observer, point out things that are happening in the classroom of which the teacher is unaware. Center staff may also, because of their contacts in other schools, be able to recommend different kinds of teachers to visit or talk with. More than one person has said, "The teachers' center saved my life that first year."

Although new teachers generally come directly from training programs, they usually have not had work in all the curriculum areas specific to the age and level they end up teaching. They will certainly have had courses in reading, but may not have done work aimed specifically at the range of reading readiness in a first grade classroom, or at the problem of poor readers in a tenth grade science class. On this point both the college and the teachers' center can be helpful, the one in offering extension courses locally at times convenient for teachers, the other in helping the new teacher select a course that is appropriate, in designing and sponsoring courses and workshops, or in counseling the teacher on an individual basis about materials to use (or develop) and techniques to try.

Concerns about "How to?" and "Can I?" are likely to continue for some time, with lessening force, but at the beginning of the year there is often an additional anxiety or confusion to which the teacher must respond concerning the routines of the school: whatever the system of slips, passes, plan books, registers, attendance-keeping, and milk money collection may be within the culture of that particular school. The-Way-We-Do-It of each school is different and may be a source of real confusion to the newcomer who has never done any of it before. A school handbook can be helpful, but is no substitute for a teacher or principal willing to make the special effort to guide the newcomer through the system. The teachers' center can suggest, initiate, or organize such support.

Finally, a beginning teacher needs time. When you are doing something for the first time you are very likely to put in long hours on preparation which, with the hindsight of experience, might well have been done more efficiently and in far less time. Since the beginning teacher is doing everything for the first time, if she tries to individualize the math program or deviate from the text, she will inevitably be spending late nights and long weekends searching for and working out new lessons. Administrators should be sensitive to the simple time needs of new teachers, and certainly should not burden them with the most difficult classes or load them down with out-of-class duties.

The British have been experimenting for the last five years with what they call Induction Programmes for beginning teachers: special programs within a local school district (an LEA) for first year teachers (probationers). Although there is some variation among the pilot programs, they all share these characteristics: 1) a reduced teaching load of up to 25 percent; 2) an experienced teacher (known variously as a teacher tutor, professional tutor, or staff tutor) who is appointed to help a group of up to ten probationers, and is also given released time for working with them; 3) provision for special courses offered by the colleges during the school year (in England such a course may vary from one session to several dozen, is usually not offered for credit, and does not carry a tuition charge). Items two and three could be offered by American teachers.

The induction programs seem to be designed to meet all the needs of the beginning teacher that we have identified. They give time for extra preparation and special course work, for conferring with or observing other teachers, and for sharing experiences with other beginners. They provide an official relationship, intended to be both supportive and instructive, with an experienced colleague who is not the head of the school and who is not responsible for decisions about retention or promotion. The pilot programs have been very successful, not only in providing assistance to the beginning teachers, but also—a major bonus—in directing the attention of the teacher tutor, and in some cases the whole school staff, toward thinking about teaching, and the art and craft thereof.

The Middle-Stage Teacher: Keeping the Vision Alive

The middle-stage teacher is still in need of some support and reassurance—aren't we all?—but probably needs practical advice on control and curriculum in a few areas only: those that have never seemed quite right and those in which everything is so under control that the quality of excitement and spontaneity has been lost. The teachers' center staff's role here

has a new importance: to initiate suggestions, to raise questions, to extend the range of perception; and, as soon as the task becomes easy, to make it challenging again by adding new dimensions to it. Yes, the room is well-organized, the children quiet. Too quiet, perhaps? Quiet to what end? What do we know about how children learn, and how are we applying that knowledge in the classroom?

The beginning teacher is just putting theory into practice for the first time and, beyond being mindful that the one must be consistent with the other, must concentrate on the mechanics of *doing it*. When the mechanics are mastered, as we assume they are for the most part with the middle-stage teacher, it is time to look again at what, in the long run, we are trying to achieve with children, and why. Probably the most important role for those who work with middle-stage teachers is to keep alive a vision of what education might be, far beyond what it is, and to insist on an attitude of inquiry, even when it is uncomfortable; for this is the stage where a teacher, well over the initial hurdles, may settle into a rut and remain there, stuck. The teachers' center needs to circulate a constant flow of new ideas and resources on the one hand, and on the other to continue to raise hard questions and exert "friendly persuasion" toward teachers who should, perhaps, be taking a closer look at what they are doing. Change is often precipitated by a sense of discomfort or dissatisfaction, a feeling that all is not well, but the risks involved in change are only possible in a climate that is basically supportive, and from a position of some self-confidence. Working with the middle-stage teacher, the teachers' center staff is faced with the delicate and fascinating problem of trying to determine when to reduce risk for the teacher and when to encourage it.

Work on curriculum, as an individual project or as a team project with fellow teachers, can be a valuable and exciting way to get stage-two and stage-three teachers to examine their objectives, and to bring those objectives in line with the appropriate activities. If teachers work together there is an opportunity to rub ideas together and make a fire; even if they work alone the nature of the task requires them to consider what they are doing, how they can evaluate it, and how the content and purpose can be joined together for the greater benefit of the learners.

It may be worth pointing out that the concept of a teachers' center grew out of work on the Nuffield Mathematics Project in England. Teachers, mathematicians, and other educators, working together in the early '60s, discovered that in the process of dreaming up, working out, testing, and reworking their ideas for math instruction, they began to think about teaching and learning in new ways. "The essence of curricular review and development is new thinking by the teachers, as well as their appraisal of the thinking of others. This means that teachers should have regular opportunities to meet together . . ." Some teachers' centers offer mini-grants or incentive grants of a few hundred dollars to a teacher or group of teachers who wish to work on a curriculum development project, as a way of encouraging this kind of inservice activity. Involving teachers in research, not as subjects to be studied but as experimenters, learning and practicing the skills of research, is a related and little explored possibility with great potential for fostering a spirit of cooperative inquiry in the schools.

The Master Teacher: Reaching the Summit and Sharing the Experience

Stage-three teachers, on or near a state of mastery, described as "experienced teachers," "master teachers," "older teachers" (though they aren't necessarily old), or "our best teachers" may not be perfect, but they invariably create good learning environments for children and they manage a classroom with apparent ease. These teachers are, almost by definition, those who are always trying to learn more, and to accomplish more with children. They are often the teachers who have fallen upon the idea of a teachers' center with the most vigor and enthusiasm. Their involvement in the development and direction of centers is a clue to the kind of professional development activity that is appropriate for the stage-three teacher.

She is looking for responsibility, for an opportunity to talk over ideas and problems with other colleagues, for an opportunity to share what she has discovered about children's learning.

At this final stage, teacher and teachers' center staff advisor are peers, each finding sustenance and challenge in the other; and here, when we meet as equals, the glove is really thrown down: what can we come up with that is of value to this teacher? What will keep alive the wish to risk and the sense of significance that made the profession of teaching seem so exciting when we first began?

The sharing and passing on of expertise is one excellent way both to recognize and to challenge the skills of the master teacher. The master teacher should be encouraged and enabled to offer courses and workshops, to work with beginning teachers, to assume staff development responsibilities, and to be identified as a resource. The Resource Agent Program (RAP) in Vermont provides an example of how the special skills and good ideas of able teachers can be recognized and passed on. Each year a certain number of teachers with some special skill or homemade curriculum project are listed in a catalogue that is circulated throughout Vermont. Any school or teacher wishing to try one of the activities listed in the catalog may contact the RAP agent and make arrangements for a classroom demonstration or workshop in the school. The state, through Title V-C, reimburses the teacher for expenses and offers a small honorarium; there is no charge to the contracting school. In this way, practicing classroom teachers, released for up to the equivalent of five days per year, become teachers of teachers. The business of teaching other adults about what one has taught to children requires different teaching skills and a new approach to a familiar subject. Recognizing local stage-three teachers as its most valuable resource, the teachers' center must develop a program to recruit, prepare, and assist these teachers in providing workshops and consulting help to stage-one and stage-two teachers.

For similar reasons teachers should be encouraged to write about their classroom experience and about their thoughts on education. The workshop leader is explaining and clarifying what she has learned, both to herself and to other teachers, as she demonstrates it. The teacher who writes, shapes and organizes her thoughts on paper. Both processes extend the original experience, giving it a new dimension and a new life. Both can require the creative teacher to grapple with the meaning of the experience, and to examine it in its entirety. Teachers may write about what they have done for the purpose of sharing it with others, or they may write to clarify their own ideas and to provide insights for pedagogy in general—for all those interested in the study of teaching. Teachers' centers should encourage teachers to write for both reasons and should help them find avenues for publication.

In addition to extending the influence and keeping alive the challenge for the master teacher by these more or less formal means, the teachers' center can also stimulate thinking about deeper issues in education by putting people of like mind in touch with one another and by giving them regular opportunities to meet together; for instance, by sponsoring a regular seminar for examination and discussion of children's thinking, focusing on episodes from their own classrooms reported in a detailed, objective, and systematic way.

The Need for Individualization in Inservice Training

The theory that there are steps or stages in teachers' growth suggests that those who aim to stimulate or support that growth must be sensitive to the stage *each teacher* is in, and alert to the clues that reveal "where the teacher is at." Traditional forms of inservice education are primarily conferences, workshops, and courses, for which teachers earn credit. These are group experiences, similar in many ways to the teacher's preservice experiences. Teachers' center experience indicates that the formal and traditional forms of inservice programs decrease in value as teachers increase in mastery. Hands-on workshops and how-to courses are valuable to most first- and some second-stage teachers, but they are helpful only occasionally (if in a totally new area) for third-stage teachers. Second- and third-stage teachers, if they choose to take courses at all, or if they must do so to accumulate credits, are likely to choose courses in one of three categories: courses that will enable them to rise within the school's administrative hierarchy; theoretical courses in subjects such as learning theory, philosophy, or the politics of schools; or courses oriented toward personal interests and personal growth.

Most approaches to inservice planning are, as a friend of mine puts it, like administering a non-specific antibiotic to the whole population.[6] No one knows what the germ is, or which teachers are suffering from the disease, so the

medicine is administered indiscriminately to everyone. However, all of our discussion indicates that inservice programs should be specific to the needs of the individual, and that there are many needs *not* met by traditional programs. We need to make it clear that *giving* a workshop is as educational as taking one; that writing an article is as instructive as writing a term paper; that teachers talking about educational problems or working on a curriculum project are learning as much or more than they would be learning in a course. Finally, the attention to the individual situation of both a teacher and a class, which is possible when a teachers' center staff advisor can work in the classroom alongside the teacher, must be recognized for what it is: a unique and important opportunity for individualized instruction at an adult level.

Teachers' centers, programmed for and by teachers and operating somewhat outside the established educational structure, are particularly well-suited to the invention and encouragement of diverse forms of inservice activity. Certainly they are uniquely suited to promoting interaction among teachers so that teachers at different stages of development can meet and learn from each other.

THE FUTURE: SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS OF TEACHERS

Although we can gather examples of what has been helpful and can begin to identify new ways to work with teachers, what we know now seems to me to be only a vague and indistinct glimpse of what can be. We are only beginning to understand what it may be possible to offer teachers for their professional growth, or to understand teachers at different stages of their professional advancement. To those interested in the application of stage theory to professional development among teachers, many questions present themselves. How do the three stages of teacher development correlate with other taxonomies, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Erikson's stages of human development, or the work of Loevinger and others writing about adult learning?[7] What is the significance of the fact that most beginning teachers are becoming independent and self-supporting for the first time, trying to find out who and what they are in the adult world at the same time that they are coping with the pressures of the classroom? Is it significant that stage two often coincides with the period when family life assumes a special importance? Are there more distinct gradations within the middle stage that, once identified, would help us to respond better to teachers in transition? What is this condition I have called "stuckness?" What creates it? How do we recognize it—distinguishing inertia from the temporary plateaus necessary for practicing and understanding a craft or profession? How do we respond to stuckness?

The road is really just opening up before those of us who work in teachers' centers. If we can shift the field of vision from teachers to ourselves as teachers of teachers, we can look at ourselves running for mastery in our own profession: No "slow sort of country" this!

NOTES

1 See, for example, Benjamin S. Bloom and David R. Krathwohl, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain* (New York: Longman, 1977); Jean Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, 1976); and Lawrence Kohlberg and Rochelle Mayer, "Development as the Aim of Education," *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 42, 1972.

2 Lawrence Kohlberg and Rochelle Mayer, "Development as the Aim of Education," *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 42, 1972.

3 Kristin Field, "Teacher Development: A Study of the Stages of Development in Teachers," Brookline Teacher Center, 88 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02146.

4 L. G. Katz, "Developmental Stages of Preschool Teachers," mimeo.

5 Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (Brookline, Mass.: Branden Press, Inc., 1977).

6 Eileen Nelson, personal communication.

7 See, for example, Jane Loevinger, *Ego Development: Conceptions and Theories* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1976); and Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

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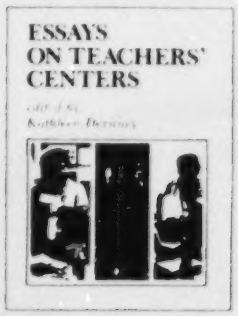
Teachers' Centers Exchange Directory—1980, edited by Jeanne Lance and Barbara Piper, describes program information about 161 American teachers' centers (five are in Canada) in touch with the Teachers' Centers Exchange. The centers included here have been selected because they are active in the network of teacher educators served by the Exchange as an information center and communications facilitator. Descriptions in this volume highlight each center's program, needs assessment, evaluation, resources, staff, setting, participation, fees and credit, affiliation, support, and decision making. July 1980. 348 pp. $12.50 prepaid from Order Department, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103.

Essays on Teachers' Centers, edited by Kathleen Devaney, is a collection of twelve essays about inservice experiences that engage teachers' talents and energies while offering intellectual and emotive stimulation and support. Articles are included on the role of the in-classroom advisor, teacher design of classroom curriculum, and discussions of the varied learning principles underlying teachers' center development and practice. Contributors are Maja Apelman, Sharon Feiman, William Fibkins, Lilian Katz, Robert Mai, Theodore Manolakes, Milbrey McLaughlin, Thomas O'Brien, Adelaide Sproul, and L. C. Taylor. The writings were gathered during 1976 from educators in and around teachers' centers in the United States and England. A selected, annotated bibliography is provided. 199 pp. $10.00 prepaid. Order Department, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103. California residents add sales tax.



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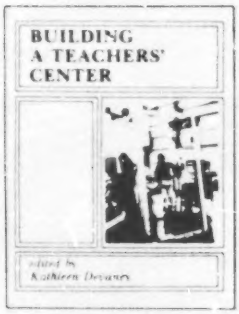

Building a Teachers' Center, edited by Kathleen Devaney, is a collection of 16 articles that give first-hand accounts from teachers' center leaders of aspects involved in starting a teachers' center. In some of these articles, additional advice has been inserted from the Proceedings of "Workparties"—small conferences of teachers' center leaders, which the Exchange has sponsored since 1977. Thus the book represents the substance—grassroots experience—and the style—self-reflection and voluntary sharing with others—of the teachers' centers network. The book begins with two papers that relate how a combination of convictions, experience, high energy, and happenstance formed the first American teachers' centers. Following are several essays on practical matters—staffing, needs assessment, evaluation, space, programming, workshops, advising, managing, budget, advisory board, funding, and self-publishing. Finally, three articles are provided on centers' relationships with school districts and with parents and community. $9.70 prepaid. Order from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York 10027.

- **Occasional Paper No. 1,** *Surveying Teachers' Centers—from Grassroots Beginnings to Federal Support,* by Kathleen Devaney. Second edition July 1980. ERIC ED 151 352. Occasional Papers available from Teachers' Centers Exchange, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103. 1–25 copies free; 26 or more copies, 50¢ per copy.

- **Occasional Paper No. 3,** *Commonality and Diversity in Four Teachers' Centers—Conversations at Chatauqua.* July 1978. ERIC ED 167 535.

- **Occasional Paper No. 4,** *Staffing a Teachers' Center—A Joint Venture in Growth and Change,* by Christine San Jose. September 1978. ERIC ED 167 522.

- **Occasional Paper No. 5,** *A Distinctive Option in Inservice, The Teachers' Center Meets Individual Needs and Institutional Goals,* by Amity P. Buxton. June 1979. ERIC ED 175 852.

- **Occasional Paper No. 6,** *The Advisor: Emissary from Teachers' Center to Classroom,* by Gretchen Thomas. October 1979. ERIC ED 182 312.

- **Occasional Paper No. 7,** *Writings from the Network,* an annotated bibliography of publications of interest to people in teachers' centers or similar forms of staff development. November 1980.

- **Occasional Paper No. 8,** *Starting Out, Moving On, Running Ahead Or How the Teachers' center can Attend to Stages in Teachers' Development,* by Heidi Watts. November 1980.

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